

- **Teens should also avoid:**
  - **Grooming** (e.g., putting on makeup, shaving, combing your hair, etc.)
  - **Eating and drinking** (e.g., a cup of coffee, sandwich, etc.)
  - **Reading**, including maps
  - **Using a PDA or navigation system**, such as a GPS
  - **Changing the radio station**, CD, or Mp3 player
  - **Listening to a video** playing in the backseat

## Positive Parenting Tips that Promote Good Behavior in Teens

Teens need positive, caring adults to provide consistent support, guidance, praise and encouragement, as well as a safety net. By supporting them as they mature, you allow teens room to develop their own sense of identity. Teens will gradually gain confidence in their ability to make decisions, but they need to know they can still turn to you for advice.



To help your teen develop and grow independent, parents and caregivers should:

- Listen to their teens and try to understand their feelings
- Talk to teens in a friendly open way
- Help teens set and achieve realistic goals
- Expose teens to diversity and demonstrate how to accept differences
- Help identify possible issues while encouraging teens to practice their decision making skills by:
  - Encouraging teens to consider the consequences of their actions, both good and bad
  - Discussing pros and cons of specific decisions
- Help teens bounce back from poor choices

It is vital to have good communication with teens. Good communication builds strong relationships. It takes effort to communicate so that everyone is understood. Research from Penn State shares the acronym **RECIPE** for better communication with adolescents:

**R - Reflective listening.** Truly listen to what the other person is saying. Repeat back what you think they said, either exactly or in your own words. By repeating or rephrasing what the speaker said, the speaker knows they have been heard.

**E - Encourage and understand each other.** Consider what they are trying to express to you by putting yourself in their “shoes.”

**C - Compromise and cooperate with each other.** Find ways to work together rather than argue.

**I - “I” messages keep people from feeling blamed.** They help you express your own feelings rather than focusing on the behavior of the other person. For example: “I get very worried when you don’t answer your phone when I call” is better for maintaining healthy communication than “You NEVER answer your phone when I call”.

**P - Practice, practice, practice!** Good communication is difficult to learn. Expect it to take time to get it right and allow other family members to get it right as well.

**E - Engagement.** Pay full attention to the person speaking to you. It is difficult to hear what is really said if you are doing something else. (Can you really watch television and listen to someone?)

### HERE'S HELP



Use the **Family Resources** on

**pages 91–95** to learn about a variety of family support services available in your community.